

READ

Matthew 5:38-48

CONSIDER

The Sermon on the Mount is constantly challenging us to deepen our understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. In Matthew 5, six times Jesus says, “you have heard that it was said ... but I tell you.” He is calling us not to skirt the law so it is easier to walk in the way of Jesus but He raises the bar, inviting us to bless those who curse us by loving and praying for them.

Leviticus 19:18 is a call to not to seek revenge or hold a grudge but love your neighbor as yourself. People figured that if they could narrow the definition of neighbor to those who they liked, they could fulfill the Law. Jesus sees their attempt at Scriptural manipulation and raises the definition of neighbor, calling the Jews to love Samaritans (Luke 10) and for us to love and pray for those who persecute us.

For our Community Groups, make sure you find time this year to go through this sermon series together as a group as this will allow us as a church to be formed together in the way of Jesus.

See you Sunday.

Pastor Tim Sreedharan

PRAY

Father, it is so easy to love those who love us and vilify those who disagree with us. It is easy for us to see others as the enemy and dismiss them as we dehumanize them. As your word calls us, may we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Through the gospel, help us see that our enemy is someone in desperate need of Jesus, just like us. May we be peacemakers, who go and share the Good News with those who oppose us, inviting them to also become children of God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DIVING DEEPER

Week 3

Before we dive in...

Matthew 5:38-48

(The Values of the Kingdom)

THE PHRASE/IDEA

“**You have heard it said**” is repeated six times (v21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). This marks a section of Scripture where Jesus takes OT teachings or common Jewish idioms and pushes us to live it out in a deeper way. Jesus is concerned not just with our behaviour, but our heart as well.

- **Read v38-42.** The statement in **v38** comes from **Exodus 20:14 & Deuteronomy 24:1**. This would have been an excellent tool in those days to combat honour-bound intertribal conflict. How do you feel about the statement to not resist an evil person? Practically, how hard is it to live this out?
- **Read v43-47. Verse 43** summarizes how many approach politics today. How does the call to pray for those who persecute you help us love our enemy?
- How can this passage be seen as a move away from transactional relationships toward genuine love? How many of the relationships in your life are transactional in nature?
- Even violent gang members love their own. How does this call challenge you to love better? Who comes to mind that you have been treating like an enemy?
- For a more thorough explanation of **v48** and what is perfection, [click here](#).
- How does this passage challenge us to love God and love others (**Matt 22:36-40**)? Share together and pray for one another.